staying and that this had been corrected when pointed out. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was responsible for printing the tickets and for making arrangements for the Indian cricket team, including their hotel stay. The PCB Chairman apologized to the High Commission of India for the mistake, and correction was made in the tickets printed during later matches.

Opening of Consulates in Mumbai and Karachi

2766. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether the Consulates of India and Pakistan have been opened at Mumbai and Karachi;

if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

by when the consulates are expected to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRYOF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) During the Foreign Secretary level meeting in June, 2004, India and Pakistan agreed, in principle, to reopen the Consulates General in Mumbai and Karachi.

Agreement was reached during President Musharraf s visit to India in April, 2005 to reopen these by the end of 2005. However, Pakistan High Commission has not been able to find premises to rent so far. India is r?ady to open its Consulate General in Karachi but Pakistan is insisting on simultaneous opening of the Consulates General in Mumbai and Karachi.

Subsidy for Kailash Mansarovar Pilgrimage

†2767. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether Government are aware of the fact that the amount charged from the pilgrims going for Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage is being increased continuously;

whether Government would also consider providing any subsidy on the lines of subsidy being provided for Haj Pilgrimage in order to check this increase; and

if so, the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is presently organised by the Government under a bilateral arrangement with the Chinese Government through the Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh, Uttaranchal, for which Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) makes the necessary logistical arrangements on the Indian side, while the arragements on the Chinese side are looked after the the Chinese authorities. There has been marginal increase over the years in the amount charged by KMVN and the Chinese side from the pilgrims, which is essentially due to increased cost of maintenance of facilities and improvements in amenities being provided to the pilgrims during the Yatra.

(b) and (c) Government pay Rs. 3,250/- (rupees Three thousand two hundred and fifty) for each pilgrim to KMVN for arrangements made by KMVN for the Yatra. In addition, during the course of the Yatra, facilities provided by the Government to the pilgrims include free medical assistance, security and escort cover by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) till the Lipulekh Pass on the Indian side, communication links with China, and provision of satellite phone to the Liaison Officer for each batch of pilgrims for use during emergency throughout the Yatra.

A Liaison Officer is attached by the Government with each batch of pilgrims, who is responsible for their general welfare.

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and Haj are essentially different so far as the number of pilgrims, mode of travel and the nature of terrain are involved. Therefore, there may not be a direct comparison between the two.

Return of Taliban in Afghanistan

2768. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

whether Government are monitoring the reported return of Taliban elements in Afghanistan;

if so, the details thereof;

whether the country participated in the recent meeting in London on the reconstruction of Afghanistan;